AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A content selection method in a network interconnecting a content selection requesting station and a plurality of content providing stations, the plurality of content providing stations each connected to a plurality of contents or content providing devices, the content selection method for selecting, by the plurality of content providing stations, a content or content providing device from among the plurality of contents or content providing devices, in which the content selection requesting station selects from among the plurality of content providing stations that in turn select from among the contents or content providing devices, comprising :

the content selection requesting station storing a selection rule for selecting from among the content providing stations;

a controller transmitting a content switching instruction to the content selection requesting station in accordance with a single user action to the controller; and

the content selection requesting station, which has received the content switching instruction, transmitting the content switching instruction to a content providing station,

wherein, each said content providing station stores a respective selection order management table indicative of an order for selecting in turn ~~from among~~ the plurality of contents or content providing devices as connection targets, and every time the ~~same~~ single user action to the controller is ~~performed~~ repeated, the content providing station refers to the respective selection order management table and switches the content or content providing device to be selected to a content or content providing device of an order following an order of a currently selected content or content providing device in the respective selection order management table in a case where the content or content providing device of the order following the order of the currently selected content or content providing device is present in the respective selection order management table.

2. (Previously presented) The method as set forth in Claim 1, further comprising:

sending back the content held by the content providing station, from the content providing station that has received the content switching instruction, to the content selection requesting station.

3. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in Claim 1, further comprising:

the content selection requesting station storing information for specifying a content providing station and an associated content providing device that have been most recently selected by the content selection requesting station; and

the content selection requesting station resuming, in accordance with the information for specifying the content providing station and the associated content providing device that have been most recently selected by the content selection requesting station, connection with the content providing station and the associated content providing devices that have been most recently selected by the content selection requesting station, if the content selection requesting station has previously received a content from the associated content providing device of the content providing station and the connection has been stopped.

4. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in Claim 1, further comprising:

the content selection requesting station storing information for specifying a content providing station that has been most recently selected by the content selection requesting station;

the content providing station storing information for specifying an associated content or content providing device that has been most recently selected by the content selection requesting station; and

resuming, in accordance with these sets of the information for specifying the content providing station that has been most recently selected by the content selection requesting station and the information for specifying the associated content or content providing device that has been most recently selected by the content selection requesting station, connection between the

content selection requesting station and the content providing station that has been most recently selected by the content selection requesting station, if the content selection requesting station has previously received the associated content from the content providing station and the connection has been stopped, or if the content selection requesting station has previously received a content from the content providing device of the content providing station and the connection has been stopped.

5. (Previously presented) The method as set forth in Claim 4, wherein:

if explicitly disconnected by the content selection requesting station, or if having performed no video transmission to the content selection requesting station for a certain period from a last time the content providing station has performed video transmission to the content selection requesting station, the content providing station erases the information, which is stored by the content providing station, for specifying the content or content providing device that has been most recently selected by the content selection requesting station.

6. (Previously presented) The method as set forth in Claim 5, wherein:

if having performed no video transmission to the content selection requesting station for a certain period from a last time it has performed video transmission to the content selection requesting station, the content providing station erases the information, which it stores, for specifying the content or content providing device that has been most recently selected by the content selection requesting station.

7. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in Claim 2, wherein:

the content providing station transmits, to the content selection requesting station, information regarding a content that is to send back to the content selection requesting station.

8. (Previously presented) The method as set forth in Claim 2, wherein:

the content providing station transmits, to the content selection requesting station, information regarding a content or content providing device that is available to be selected next by the content selection requesting station.

9. (Previously presented) The method as set forth in Claim 2, wherein:

the content providing station transmits, to the content selection requesting station, information regarding a content or content providing device that is available to be selected by the content selection requesting station.

10. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in Claim 1, wherein:

at least two content providing stations are targeted for selection;

the selection rule regarding the at least two content providing stations, which is stored in the content selection requesting station, is to reselect a content providing station that has been selected first, after selection of each of the at least two content providing stations targeted for selection is performed in turn in accordance with the selection rule.

11. (Previously presented) The method as set forth in Claim 1, wherein:

if there still remains a content or content providing device to select, the thus selected one of the content providing stations selecting, in accordance with a predetermined content selection rule, a content or content providing device to select next, and the thus selected one of the content providing stations transmitting what is contained in the content or content providing device to select next, to the content selection requesting station; and

if there remains no content or content providing device that is to select, the thus selected one of the content providing stations transmitting information that there remains no content or content providing device to select.

12. (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in Claim 1, wherein:

when receiving ~~the~~ information that there remains no content or content providing device to select, the content selection requesting station changes a content providing station connected to the content selection requesting station, in accordance with the selection rule for selecting from among the content providing stations.

13. (Previously presented) The method as set forth in Claim 1, further comprising:

the content selection requesting station confirming (i) a communication state regarding communication between the content selection requesting station and the thus selected one of the content providing stations, and (ii) a response state regarding responding from the thus selected one of the content providing stations; and

if the communication state is less than a level, the content selecting requesting station selecting a different content providing station to select next in accordance with the selection rule for selecting from among the content providing stations.

14. (Previously presented) The method as set forth in Claim 2, wherein:

the content providing station confirming (i) a communication state regarding communication between the content providing station and a content that is to send back and (ii) a response state regarding responding with respect to the content that is to send back; and if the communication state is less than a level, the content providing station sending back a content that is to be selected next in accordance with a predetermined content selection rule.

15. (Previously presented) The method as set forth in Claim 2, wherein:

in the case where bandwidth available for communication between the content selection requesting station and the content providing station is narrower than bandwidth necessary for transmitting a content that the content providing station is about to send back, the content

providing station transmitting a content that is to be selected next to the content that the content providing station is about to send back, in accordance with the a predetermined content selection rule.

16. (Previously presented) The method as set forth in Claim 2, wherein:

in a state where an active content that the active content providing station is about to send back is in use, the content providing station sending back a content that is to be selected next to the active content that the content providing station is about to send, in accordance with a predetermined content selection rule.

17. (Previously presented) The method as set forth in Claim 16, wherein:

the state where the active content is in use is a state where the active content is being used by another content selection requesting station, or a state where a user on the content providing station side is using the active content without using the content selection requesting station.

18. (Previously presented) The method as set forth in Claim 1, further comprising:

the content selection requesting station confirming (i) a communication state regarding communication between the content selection requesting station and the thus selected one of the content providing stations, and (ii) a response state regarding responding from the thus selected one of the content providing stations; and

if the communication state is less than a level, the content selection requesting station providing, to the operator, information that the communication state is less than the level.

19. (Previously presented) The method as set forth in Claim 1, further comprising:

the content providing station confirming (i) a communication state regarding communication between the content providing station and the content providing device thus

selected, and (ii) a response state regarding responding with respect to the content providing device thus selected;

if the communication state is less than a level, the content providing station transmitting, to the content selection requesting station, information that the communication state is less than the level;

the content selection requesting station receiving the information; and

the content selection requesting station providing, to the operator, information that the communication state between the content providing station and the content providing device thus selected is less than the level.

20. (Previously presented) The method as set forth in Claim 13, wherein:

the state where the communication state is less than the level is a state where communication is possible but one of electric wave strength, the response state, and a communication error ratio is less than the level.

21. (Previously presented) The method as set forth in Claim 13, wherein:

the state where the communication state is less than the level is (i) a state where a station at the other end is not turned on, (ii) a state where no response is received because the station at the other end is at a distance from the content selection requesting station such that the station at the other end cannot sufficiently receive the transmitted content switching instruction, or (iii) a state where the thus selected one of the content providing stations is physically disconnected from the content providing device.

22. (Previously presented) The method as set forth in Claim 18, wherein:

in providing, to the operator, information that the communication state between the content selection requesting station and the selected one of the content providing stations is less than the level, when the communication level is as such,

the content selection requesting station distinctly informing the operator whether the communication state is (A) a communication state where communication is possible but one of electric wave strength, the response state, and a communication error ratio is less than the level, or (B) a communication state where (i) a station at the other end is not turned on, (ii) no response is received because the station at the other end is at a distance from the content selection requesting station such that the station at the other end cannot sufficiently receive the transmitted content switching instruction, or (iii) the content providing device is physically disconnected.

23. (Previously presented) The method as set forth in Claim 19, wherein:

in providing, to the operator, information that the communication state between the content selection requesting station and the content providing device thus selected is less than the level, when the communication level is as such,

the content selection requesting station distinctly informing the operator whether the communication state is (A) a communication state where communication is possible but one of electric wave strength, the response state, and a communication error ratio is less than the level, or (B) a communication state where (i) a station at the other end is not turned on, (ii) no response is received because the station at the other end is at a distance from the content selection requesting station such that the station at the other end cannot sufficiently receive the transmitted content switching instruction, or the content providing device is physically disconnected.

24. (Canceled)

25. (Previously presented) The method as set forth in Claim 1, wherein:

the content selection requesting station includes means which controls switching of an external connection device for a display device on which the content received by the content selection requesting station is to be displayed;

if the content selection requesting station is selected as the external connection device for the display device when the content selection requesting station receives the content switching instruction entered by the operator, the content selection requesting station performs content selection or content providing device selection; and

if all contents or content providing devices are selected once, or if a station other than the content selection requesting station is selected as the external connection device for the display device, the switching of the external connection device is carried out.

26. (Previously presented) The method as set forth in Claim 1, wherein:

the selection rule is stored only in the content selection requesting station; and

the content or content providing device is held only by the content providing station.

27. (Currently Amended) A content selection method in a network interconnecting a plurality of content providing stations and a content selection requesting station, each content providing station having a plurality of contents, the content selection method in which in accordance with a request from the content selection requesting station, each said content providing station selects a content from among the plurality of contents that each said content providing station has and sends back the selected content to the content selection requesting station, the method comprising:

each said content providing station storing a control signal for the content that each said content providing station has; and

if the content to be sent back is not available for viewing, each said content providing station transmitting the control signal to the content so as to cause the content to be available for viewing,

each said content providing station receiving a content switching instruction from the content selection requesting station in accordance with a single user action to a controller; and

wherein, each said content providing station stores a respective selection order management table indicative of an order for selecting in turn ~~from among~~ the plurality of contents as connection targets and, every time the ~~same~~ single user action to the controller is ~~performed~~ repeated, each said content providing station refers to the selection order management table and switches the content to be sent back to a content of an order following an order of a currently selected content in the selection order management table in a case where the content of the order following the order of the currently selected content is present in the selection order management table.

28. (Currently Amended) A content selection method in a network interconnecting a plurality of content providing stations and a content selection requesting station, each content providing station having a plurality of contents, the content selection method in which in accordance with a request from the content selection requesting station, each said content providing station selects a content from among the plurality of contents that each said content providing station has and sends back the selected content to the content selection requesting station, the method comprising:

each said content providing station storing a control signal for the content that each said content providing station has; and

when the content to be sent back is changed from a first content to a second content, each said content providing station transmitting a control signal to the first content so as to cause the first content to be not in use,

each said content providing station receiving a content switching instruction from the content selection requesting station in accordance with a single user action to a controller; and

wherein, each said content providing station stores a respective selection order management table indicative of an order for selecting in turn ~~from among~~ the plurality of contents as connection targets and, every time the ~~same~~ single user action to the controller is ~~performed~~ repeated, each said content providing station refers to the selection order management table and switches the content to be sent back to a content of an order following an order of a

currently selected content in the selection order management table in a case where the content of the order following the order of the currently selected content is present in the selection order management table.

29. (Previously presented) A content selection requesting station which selects a desired content or content providing device from among contents or content providing devices that a plurality of content providing stations have, wherein:

the content selection requesting station transmits a content switching instruction to the content providing station according to the method as set forth in claim 1.

30. (Previously presented) A content providing station which, when selected by a content selection requesting station, transmits, to the content selection requesting station, what is contained in the content or content providing device that the content providing station has, wherein:

the content providing station receives a content switching instruction from the content selection requesting station according to the method as set forth in Claim 1.

31. (Previously presented) A content switching instruction device for use in the method as set forth in Claim 1, which transmits, to a content selection requesting station, a content switching instruction given by an operator.

32. (Previously presented) The content switching instruction device as set forth in Claim 31, wherein

the content switching instruction device transmitting the content switching instruction given by the operator, without using the content selection requesting station.

33. (Previously Presented) A program for causing a computer to implement the method as set forth in Claim 1.

34. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable recording medium storing a program for causing a computer to implement the method as set forth in Claim 1.

35. (Previously Presented) A network system having content selection requesting station, and a plurality of content providing stations wherein the method as set forth in Claim 1 is performed,

the content selection requesting station selecting a desired content from among contents that the content providing stations have,

the content selection requesting station transmitting a content switching instruction to each of content providing stations according to the method as set forth in claim 1,

each of the content providing stations, when selected by the content selection requesting station, transmitting to the content selection requesting station, what is contained in content that the content providing station has,

each of the content providing stations receiving the content switching instruction from the content selection requesting station according to the method as set forth in Claim 1.

36. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising:

the content selection requesting station storing information for specifying a content providing station and an associated content that have been most recently selected by the content selection requesting station; and

the content selection requesting station resuming, in accordance with the information for specifying the content providing station and the associated content that have been most recently selected by the content selection requesting station, connection with the content providing station

and the content providing devices having the associated content that have been most recently selected by the content selection requesting station, if the content selection requesting station has previously received the associated content of the content providing station and the connection has been stopped.